

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 177 621

CS 502 631

AUTHOR Applbaum, Ronald L.; Anatol, Mark W. E.
 TITLE An Examination of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction, Organizational Norms, and Communication Climate among Employees in an Organization.
 PUB DATE 79
 NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Communication Association of the Pacific Conference (Honolulu, Hawaii, July 30-August 1, 1979)
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Correlation; Group Norms; Higher Education; *Job Satisfaction; *Organizational Climate; *Organizational Communication; Reliability; Statistical Analysis; Validity

ABSTRACT

Three separate instruments were used to measure and assess the interrelationships of organizational norms, communication climate, and job satisfaction. Of the 155 top administrators and managers at California State University, Long Beach, 101 subjects completed all three measurement instruments. Statistical analysis showed that a significant correlation existed between job satisfaction and communication climate. Job satisfaction and organizational norms correlated significantly, but the two factors combined accounted for only four percent of the total variance. The correlation between communication climate and organizational norms was not statistically significant. A factor analysis of the organizational norms instrument indicated that it did not appear to have the validity purported by its creator. Overall, the study suggests that the hypothesized positive relationship of organizational communication and job satisfaction does occur in an actual organization. (RL)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED177621

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL NORMS, AND COMMUNICATION CLIMATE
AMONG EMPLOYEES IN AN ORGANIZATION

by

Ronald L. Applbaum, Dean
School of Humanities
Professor of Speech Communication
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, California 90840

Karl W. E. Anatol, Associate Dean
School of Humanities
Associate Professor of Speech Communication
California State University, Long Beach
Long Beach, California 90840

Communication Association of the Pacific

Honolulu, Hawaii

1979

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ronald L. Applbaum
Karl W.E. Anatol

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

C5502631

AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL NORMS, AND COMMUNICATION CLIMATE
AMONG EMPLOYEES IN AN ORGANIZATION

Every organization--whether it be located in business, government, education or industry--is unique. Each has its own culture, traditions, norms and methods of communicating, which in their totality constitute a climate for its employees. Steele and Jenks define organizational climate as "what it feels like to spend time in a social system--the weather in that region of social space. . . . it takes its meaning and reality from the experiences and feelings of the people who must work within the social system."¹ The climate of the organization is a factor which influences the quality of work life and effectiveness of organizational functioning. Alderfer defines the organizational climate as "a systematic pattern of need satisfactions that are related to organizational variables."² McGregor suggested that it was difficult to specify with any reliability exactly what variables are components of the organizational climate.³ Since that time, however, researchers have identified a number of variables that are affected by the climate and also influence the climate of an organization, for example, organizational structure, task activities and human relations training.⁴ Authors have suggested that research on organizational climate focus upon variables which have a direct influence on the organizational life of an employee.⁵ We explored three variables that theoretically contribute to the organizational climate and examined their interrelationship.

One variable in the development of an organizational climate is group norms. Norms are established to identify what employees should or should not do (behavior) or be (attitudes) as group participants.

Organizational norms define the manner in which individuals are to behave and act, prescribe the proper values, attitudes or opinions to hold or express and determine the pattern of interaction among organizational employees. Steele and Jenks suggest that it is norms that have the greatest effect on the interpersonal day-to-day climate.⁶

Norms play a major role in creating a climate for people working in organizations. In some organizations, norms help employees to be productive and enjoy their setting, while in other organizations, norms or lack of norms can cause or maintain recurring problems; for example, norms that forbid criticism can thwart employees who wish to point out decision errors in the system. Mark Alexander has identified, from studies on organizational norms, ten different categories into which norms can be placed in a given work situation:⁷

- (1) Organizational and Personal Pride. These norms deal with the influence and feelings of identification and pride.
- (2) Performance/Excellence. These norms deal with behavior that strives toward either quality and productivity or acceptance of mediocrity.
- (3) Teamwork/Communication. These norms deal with individuals working together and their level of cooperation.
- (4) Leadership/Supervision. These norms deal with the promotion or detraction from supervision.
- (5) Profitability/Cost Effectiveness. These norms determine an employee's behavior with respect to profit and cost consciousness.
- (6) Colleague and Associate Relations. These norms determine the quality of relationships that exist between people.
- (7) Customer Relations. These norms result in behavior that affects the manner in which a customer is served.

- (8) Innovativeness and Creativity. These norms determine whether original and/or creative behavior is supported and encouraged.
- (9) Training and Development. These norms deal with training and development in the organization.
- (10) Candor and Openness. These norms determine the degree of freedom in which communication can take place vertically and horizontally.

Inspection of these categories indicates that most are related in some part to communication processes in the organization. Certain categories define the operation of the communication process, while others manifest themselves in particular verbal behaviors on the part of employees.

Steele and Jenks suggest that organizational communication is influenced by the normative system of the organization.⁸ Certain norms inhibit disclosure of specific information, for example, public criticism of performance. Norms structure the feelings, attitudes, motives and expectations of individuals which, in turn, influence the effect of any particular communications.⁹

Recent research has suggested two additional major dimensions of organizational climate: (1) communication climate and (2) job satisfaction. Peterson and Pace have suggested that these two dimensions are related but independent dimensions of organizational climate and should be measured separately.¹⁰ Communication is viewed as a sub-set of organizational climate. The construct of communication climate permits clarification of the role of communication in organizational contexts. Few studies or instruments have attempted to isolate the communication dimension of organizational climate. Lawler, Hall and Oldham have suggested that "The communication pattern(s) used by the organization has an immediate impact upon the individual's life within that same organization and may

be a vital, yet currently unexplored, aspect of organizational climate."¹¹ Generally, communication is incorporated into other variables affecting the total climate of an organization.

There are a number of different definitions of job satisfaction.¹² I will define job satisfaction as the favorableness or unfavorableness with which employees view their work.¹³ The organizational climate can have a major influence on job satisfaction. The organizational climate establishes the bases for employee's perceptions of expectations. When expectations are fulfilled a corresponding degree of satisfaction is perceived and the employee tends to react more favorably toward the organization. On the other hand, when expectations are unfulfilled satisfaction is reduced and the employee tends to react unfavorably toward the organization.¹⁴ James and Jones feel that job satisfaction and perceived climate may be dynamically related and, yet, provide different sources of information. Climate provides descriptive information, often contaminated by satisfaction, while satisfaction provides evaluative assessments.¹⁵ Job satisfaction, in turn, is related to a number of variables in the organization, for example, performance, turnover, absenteeism, age, occupation and community conditions.¹⁶

The expectations employees have in an organization are molded by the existing and emergent norms of the work group. Thus, organizational norms should relate to the level of job satisfaction perceived by the employee. Job satisfaction also should be related to the communication climate in an organization. It has already been established that a relationship exists between communication and job satisfaction.¹⁷ Muchinsky found a positive relationship between measures of dimension of job satisfaction and communication in the organization, but only slightly half of these relationships were statistically significant.¹⁸ He concluded that the

instrument he utilized was not "a complete measure of organizational communication (vis-a-vis Farace and MacDonald, 1974). . ." ¹⁹ Downs suggests that "the communication behavior and levels of satisfaction in any organization may be variously shaped by multiple features of a particular organization." ²⁰

It was the purpose of this study to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational norms and communication climate in an academic organizational setting. It was hypothesized that:

1. There is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and communication climate.
2. There is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and organizational norms.
3. There is a positive correlation between communication climate and organizational norms.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation

Three separate instruments were utilized to measure communication climate, organizational norms and job satisfaction.

Communication Climate. Communication climate (CC) was measured by the Communication Climate Inventory (CCI).²¹ Developed from the research of Charles Redding, the CCI was designed to isolate and measure the communication dimension of organizational climate.²² It is composed of twelve Likert-Type items measuring six dimensions of managerial climate: (1) trust; (2) supportiveness; (3) participative decision making; (4) openness in downward communication; (5) listening in upward communication; and (6) concern for high performance goals. Tests of the measure's internal reliability have resulted in reliability coefficients ranging from .80 to .97. Factor analysis of the CCI indicates the emergence of only one main factor.

Organizational Norms. Organizational norms (ON) were measured utilizing the Organizational Norms Questionnaire developed by Mark Alexander.²³ One purpose of the questionnaire is organizational assessment and diagnosis. The instrument measures the norms in the ten categories developed by Alexander.²⁴ A normative profile of the perceived positive and negative norms is developed for each respondent. The profile provides a total score ranging from 0 to 100 and specific scores ranging from 1 to 10 for each category of the organizational norms.

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction (JS) was measure using the Job Satisfaction Index, a general index of job satisfaction inferred from attitudes toward work.²⁵ The scale is designed to provide an overall index applicable across occupational categories. A split-half reli-

ability coefficient of .87 is reported. It also is reported that the index is able to discriminate between groups who are differentially satisfied with their jobs.²⁶

Subjects

Employees were drawn from a large academic organization in the Long Beach - Southern California area, California State University, Long Beach. The sample was composed of 155 top administrators and managers. One hundred and one (101) subjects surveyed completed the three measurement instruments (67%).

Statistical Analysis

The Pearson Correlation Procedure was performed between the measures on the three instruments. A factor analysis on raw, grouped data using the Jacobi Method for computation of Eigenvalues and Eigenvectors, and Kaiser's Varimax Rotation Method (BMD08M Factor Analysis Program) was performed on the organizational norm instrument.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The correlation between the measures of job satisfaction (JS) and communication climate (CC) was .86 ($p < .01$). The correlation between job satisfaction and organizational norms (ON) was .23 ($p < .05$). And, the correlation between JS and ON was significant; however, the total variance accounted for by the two measure (4%) would caution one in accepting the second hypothesis. The correlation between CC and ON was not statistically significant at an acceptable significance level and, therefore, our third hypothesis is not confirmed.

A factor analysis was performed on the ON measure because upon observation of the raw data the instrument did not appear to consist of the independent factors as proposed by Alexander. Results of that analysis

indicated that while 7.16 percent of the common variance was accounted for by the test items across 10 factors, the items did not factor into the 10 factors proposed by Alexander. In addition, 15 of the items failed to load significantly (defined as at least .50) on any of the 10 factors. This instrument does not appear to have the validity purported by its creator.

On the other hand, unlike the Machinsky study, the measures of organization communication and job satisfaction were significantly related. The measure of communication climate used in this study may be a valid index of overall organizational communication climate.

This study suggests that the theoretical relationship of organizational communication and job satisfaction does occur in an actual organization. It is important for future organizational researchers to explore the relationship of organizational communication to other organizational climate variables. Researchers might examine the relationship between organizational communication climate and organizational structure, productivity, interpersonal relationships, morale, etc. Furthermore, researchers should explore the potential interdependency of such variables in the development of the overall organizational climate. Comparisons of variability should also be made between organizations with different hierarchical structures.

If we are to examine the relationship between organizational communication and organization norms, valid indices must be created. The need exists to test indices purported to measure variables such as organization norms which are in use but have not been subjected to the scrutiny of test validation.

Once we have identified the relationships between communication climate

and other organizational variables, as communication practitioners, we can identify those factors of the communication process which should be addressed in any program to improve the organization climate in a specific organizational context.

1. F. Steele and S. Jenks, The Feel of the Work Place, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1977), pp. 2-3.
2. C. P. Alderfer, "An organizational syndrome," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12 (1967), p. 441.
3. D. McGregor. The Human Side of Enterprise (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 141.
4. B. Schneider and D.T. Hall, "Toward Specifying the Concept of Work Climate: A Study of Roman Catholic Diocesan Priests," Journal of Applied Psychology, 56 (1972), pp. 447-455; R. Payne and D. Pheipsey, "G.G. Stern's Organizational Climate Index: A Reconceptualization and Application to Business Organizations," Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 6 (1971), pp. 77-98; R. Calmbriewski, "Organizational Properties and Managerial Training: Testing Alternative Models of Attitude Change," Academy of Management Journal, 13 (1970), pp. 13-34; H.M.R. Hond and J.W. Slocum, Jr., "Organizational Climate and the Effectiveness of a Human Relations Training Program; Academy of Management Journal, 16 (1973), pp. 185-195.
5. D. Hellriegel and J.W. Slocum, Jr., "Organizational Climate: Measures, Research and Contingencies," Academy of Management Journal 17 (1974), pp. 255-280; L.R. James and A.P. Jones, "Organizational Climate: A Review of Theory and Research," Psychological Bulletin 81 (1974), pp. 1096-1112; B. Schneider, "Organizational Climates: An Essay," Personnel Psychology, 28 (1975), pp. 447-479.
6. Steele and Jenks, op. cit., p. 60.
7. M. Alexander, "Organizational Norms," in 1977 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, J. E. Jones and J. W. Pfeiffer (eds.), La Jolla, CA: University Associates, Inc., 1977, pp. 123-125.

8. Steele and Jenks, op. cit., p. 148.
9. J. M. Jackson, "The Organization and Its Communication Problems", in Communication for Management and Business (3rd Ed.) N.B. Sigband (Scott, Foresman & Co.: Glenview, Ill., 1976), pp. 511-517.
10. B. D. Peterson and R. W. Pace, "Communication Climate and Organizational Satisfaction: A Preliminary Report on the Development of Communication Policies and Two New Instruments," unpublished paper. Brigham Young University, October, 1976.
11. E.E. Lawler, D.T. Hall and G.R. Oldham, "Organizational Structure, Process and Performance," Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 11 (1974), p. 153.
12. J. P. Wanous and E. E. Lawler III, "Measurement and Meaning of Job Satisfaction," Journal of Applied Psychology, April, 1972, pp. 95-105.
13. K. Davis, Human Behavior at Work Organizational Behavior (5th ed.) (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), p. 73.
14. Ibid., pp. 91-92.
15. James and Jones, loc. cit.
16. P. Wanous, "A Causal-Correlational Analysis of the Job Satisfaction and Performance Relationship," Journal of Applied Psychology, April 1974, pp. 139-144; and Lawrence D. Prybil, "Job Satisfaction in Relation to Job Performance and Occupational Level," Personnel Journal, February 1973, pp. 94-100; E. Lawler III, and L. W. Porter, "The Effect of Performance on Job Satisfaction," Industrial Relations, October, 1967, pp. 20-28; N. Greene, "Causal Connections among Managers' Merit Pay, Job Satisfaction, and Performance," Journal of Applied Psychology, August 1973, pp. 95-100; A. Sutermeister, "Employee Performance and Employee Need Satisfaction: Which Comes First?" California

Management Review, Summer 1971, pp. 43-47; B. Schneider and R. A. Snyder, "Some Relationships between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Climate," Journal of Applied Psychology, June 1975, pp. 318-328; and R. Wild, "Job Needs, Job Satisfaction, and Job Behavior of Woman Manual Workers," Journal of Applied Psychology, April 1970, pp. 157-162; W. W. Ronan, "Individual and Situational Variables Relating to Job Satisfaction," Journal of Applied Psychology Monograph, February 1970, pp. 1-31; G. Hrebiniak and M. Roteman, "A Study of the Relationship between Need Satisfaction and Absenteeism among Managerial Personnel," Journal of Applied Psychology, December 1973, pp. 381-383; U.S. Department of Labor, Job Satisfaction: Is There a Trend?, 1974, p. 7; M. R. Carrell and N. F. Elbert, "Some Personal and Organizational Determinants of Job Satisfaction of Postal Clerks," Academy of Management Journal, June 1974, pp. 368-373; "'Inevitable Hierarchical Gap' Emerges in Study of Capitalist and Socialist Organizations." ISR Newsletter (Institute for Social Research. The University of Michigan), Autumn 1974, pp. 4-5; U.S. Department of Labor, op. cit., pp. 9-10; E. A. Nicholson, Jr., and R. D. Roderick, "A Multivariate Analysis of the Correlates of Job Satisfaction among Men Aged 45-59," in V. F. Mitchell and others (eds.), Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Meeting, Minneapolis: The Academy of Management, 1973, pp. 221-224; and Kahn, op. cit., pp. 38, 94; R. Blauner, "Work Satisfaction and Industrial Trends in Modern Society," in W. Galenson and S. M. Lipset (eds.). Labor and Trade Unionism, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960, pp. 339-360; A. Inkeles, "Industrial Man: The Relation of Status to Experience, Perception, and Value," American Journal of Sociology, July 1960, p. 6; L. Hulin,

- "Effects of Community Characteristics on Measures of Job Satisfaction," Journal of Applied Psychology, April 1966, pp. 185-192; A. N. Turner and R. R. Lawrence, Industrial Jobs and the Worker: An Investigation of Task Attributes. Boston: Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, 1965, covering 470 workers on forty-seven jobs; R. Wild and T. Kempner, "Influence of Community and Plant Characteristics on Job Attitudes of Manual Workers," Journal of Applied Psychology, April 1972, pp. 106-113.
17. F. Herzberg, et. al. Job Attitudes: A Review of Research and Opinion, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Psychological Service of Pittsburgh, 1957), p. 46.
 18. P.M. Muchinsky, "Organizational Communication: Relationships to Organizational Climate and Job Satisfaction," Academy of Management Journal 20 (1977), pp. 592-607.
 19. Muchinsky, Ibid., p. 604, R.V. Farace and D. MacDonald, "New Directions in the Study of Organizational Communication," Personnel Psychology, 27 (1974) pp. 1-19.
 20. C. W. Downs, "The Relationship between Communication and Job Satisfaction," in Readings in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication (3rd Ed.) R. C. Huseman, et. al. (Boston: Holbrook Press, Inc., 1977), p. 374.
 21. Organizational Associates, P. O. Box 3115, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87100.
 22. W. C. Redding, Communication Within The Organization (New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc., 1972), pp. 139-422.
 23. M. Alexander, "Organizational Norms Questionnaire," in 1978 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators, J. E. Jones and J. W. Pfeiffer (eds.) La Jolla, CA: University Associates, Inc., 1978, pp. 81-88.

24. Alexander, "Organizational Norms," loc. cit.
25. A. H. Brayfield and H. F. Rothe, "An Index of Job Satisfaction,"
Journal of Applied Psychology 35, 1951, pp. 307-311.
26. Ibid.